

Ostrich Woman

When I said I could not see her
ostrich legs, stock-still and raw-boned
under her blanket, her grayed tangled hair,

her chapped lips, the gummy sleep
smeared in the corner of her eyes,
nor hear urine running out of her,

nor the clatter of dusty shuttered blinds,
nor millet worms twisting
through the flour, no dented cans

dribbling soup or creamed corn
on her kitchen floor, no misplaced diaper,
no burnt cornmeal grains floating in black oil,

how rotted stairs to my childhood
bedroom sagged, how each door creaked
and hung through their open and slam, the letters

about aid and care and rejection of pay,
so much mail, so many envelopes,
the piles of things in the dim living room

in front of her stained love seat,
the cheap extension cords running
from the neighbor's fence,
a soiled bathroom and buckets, a crippled wing

I mean a crippled wheel chair
I mean my mother, her voice
I mean her walking, her dancing.